

THE BYLAWS
FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
ENFORCED
AT ALL DIOCESE
OF THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF
ANTIOCH

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Anyone who asks for this volume, to read, collate, or copy from it, and who appropriates it to himself or herself, or cuts anything out of it, should realize that (s)he will have to give answer before God's awesome tribunal as if (s)he had robbed a sanctuary. Let such a person be held anathema and receive no forgiveness until the book is returned. So be it, Amen! And anyone who removes these anathemas, digitally or otherwise, shall himself receive them in double.

CHAPTER 1 DEFINITIONS

ARTICLE 1: The following are definitions used in these bylaws:

- The board: is the board of trustees in the diocese and other churches.
- The president of the board: Is the Archbishop or the Patriarchal Vicar of the diocese and other churches.
- The Archdiocese: The city in which the Archbishop, the head of the Archdiocese resides, and other surrounding churches that belong to it.
- Archdiocese institutions: Are the churches, the schools, the organizations, and all associations that work towards the Archdiocese.
- The board's budget: The budget of every board in the diocese and other churches where a board is formed.

CHAPTER 2 FORMATION OF THE BOARD

ARTICLE 2: The board is the responsible party that works with the president, the Archbishop or the Patriarchal Vicar in the Archdiocese and other churches and is responsible for all church matters, administration, financial, and social issues and for keeping and improving its standards and act on matters that are decided upon by the holy senate which is presided over by His Holiness the Patriarch.

ARTICLE 3: In every church of every archdiocese, a board shall be formed that consists of no less than 4 members and no more than 12 members. The members are either elected or appointed. Members must also be approved by the Archbishop or the Patriarchal Vicar and His Holiness is informed in writing.

ARTICLE 4: The number of the board members shall not exceed the maximum number mentioned in article 3 above. Also no more than one board of trustees shall be formed in any one church unless it is decided deemable by His Holiness the Patriarch in very special circumstances and for the benefit of the church.

ARTICLE 5: Board Election or appointment

- A. A board member may be directly elected if possible. If not, the Archbishop of the Archdiocese shall appoint board members according to article 3 above after the advisement of parish members with vast experience and are knowledgeable in church matters.

B. All appointed and elected members (both sexes) of the board of trustees must:

1. Be a Syrian Orthodox.
2. Possess Church privileges and be of good character.
3. Not be convicted of any crimes.
4. Have lived in or around the area of the church for at least one year and be a member of the church for which the person is to be appointed or elected to the board.
5. Be at least 30 years of age.
6. Not owe money to any diocese institution or organization.
7. Be educated.
8. Not be a member of any unlawful political organization that is against church basis, values and laws.
9. Not be a working active member in any other diocese organization.
10. Not be an employee of any diocese institution.

C. All voters (both sexes) must:

1. Be Syrian Orthodox.
2. Be a member of the church in which the election or appointment is to be conducted.
3. Be 18 years of age.
4. Have church privileges and must not have been convicted of any crime.
5. Not owe money to any institution or organization of the diocese of which he/she is a member.

ARTICLE 6: Election announcement:

- A. The president of the board of trustees shall at least one month prior to the end of the current term announce the date of the election 2 or more different occasions. A day will be appointed (a Sunday, a Friday, or any day considered an official day off) on which the election shall be conducted in the archdiocese and other churches.
- B. The nominee shall in writing announce the nominations after qualifying with all of the regulations set in article 5 of these bylaws. The president of the board shall approve all nominations.
- C. All nominations must be received at 6 P.M. on the third day prior to the election date.

- D. The names of all qualified nominees shall be announced the day following the nomination deadline.
- E. If a nomination is not approved by the president, the nominee has the right to request the reasons behind the disapproval. The president's decision at this time is final.
- F. An election committee shall be appointed by the president of the board and will be composed of 3 members to oversee the election process. Each nominee also has the right to appoint one individual to witness the election process.
- G. The election begins at the appointed place and time after which the election committee shall open the ballot box in the presence of all attendees to assure that the box is empty. A seal is then placed upon the box. The election then commences until the appointed hour at which the election ends and immediately following, the votes are counted.
- H. Voters who qualify to vote according to Article 5,C of these bylaws shall have their names appear on a voter list and may vote via one vote only.

ARTICLE 7: Counting of the votes ad announcing the election results

- A. Immediately following the end of the election, the election committee shall confirm that the number of votes match the number of voters that signed at the election poll. The votes are then sorted and read aloud in front of all attendees.
- B. A vote shall be void if it is left blank or is illegible. A report shall be attached to such votes.
- C. A vote shall be correct and acceptable if the paper contains the names of all nominees or less. However, only the names of those individuals officially nominated shall be counted. Any names written in shall be void. Also, the names of any nominee over 12 shall also be void.
- D. The results shall be announced immediately following the counting of the votes. The 12 (twelve) nominees with the highest number of votes shall be announced consecutively. Any winner above number 12 are considered reserve board members based on the number of votes received. In case of a tie, 11 (eleven) members will be announced and a lottery will be held for the other nominees.

E. The election Committee shall report the election results to the Archbishop.

CHAPTER 3

Reporting of the names of the new board

- ARTICLE 8:
- A. The Archbishop shall report the names of the new board of trustees that have agreed with Articles 3,4, and 5 of these bylaws. This report is then sent to His Holiness the Patriarch. The same shall be done if the board of trustees is an appointed board.
 - B. The president of the board shall call a meeting for all elected or appointed members within 10 days of the report discussed above. If a meeting is not called by the president, the board members have a right to immediately meet after the 10 days.
 - C. Transferring of duties and obligations from the old board to the new board shall be presided over by the Archbishop or an appointed person for this purpose and shall take place within 30 days of the first meeting of the new board. Otherwise, legal action may be taken by the president with the approval of the board members.

CHAPTER 4

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

ARTICLE 9: When the board of trustees works to improve the diocese standards, to encourage unity and to keep its bylaws for the church's daily administration, financial, and social matters, the board shall have the following privileges:

ARTICLE 10: Church Administration and Social matters:

- A. Oversee the activities of the diocese' institutions in all practices, to set bylaws accordingly, to settle all accounts, to appoint committees, and to settle any violations committed. The board shall settle any and all disputes between committee members that involve the daily operations of any institution
- B. Paying the utmost attention to all diocese schools, to supervise its development and improvement, to help these institutions financially and educationally, and to encourage the teaching of the Syriani language (the language of our lord Jesus Christ) in all schools.

- C. Shall consider all complaints made to the board concerning any organization or institution of the diocese and shall turn these complaints over to assigned committees for further investigation.
- D. The board shall supervise the opinion of the parishioners in electing a parish priest or clergy. The same shall hold in the case of appointing a new bishop to the diocese. According to the bylaws and constitutions of the church.
- E. The board shall supervise the institution and all paid employees, to encourage them for the benefit of the church and to question them in situations where lack of performance is evident and to punish if damage is caused.
- F. During the first month of every year the board shall prepare a complete yearly report discussing all of the activities performed and the goals reached by the board in the previous year to be read upon all parishioners.

ARTICLE 11: Financial responsibilities

- A. The board shall supervise all financial activities of all institutions and organizations that are associated with the diocese, to audit all financial statements, to prepare a budget, and to address ways of gaining funds in case of any financial difficulties.
- B. The board may lend or borrow funds and may rent for long term any and all properties owned by the diocese after His Holiness' approval.
- C. The board of trustees in the Archdiocese have the right to prepare an annual budget of which the goal is to organize all incoming funds and outgoing expenses, to set spiritual ceremonial fees, and the acceptance of presents and donations. The board shall also set ways to aid the poor and needy of the diocese. Also, to set monthly salaries for the parish clergy and to obtain residents for them. Also, to secure the yearly Patriarchal fee.
- D. The board shall in the first quarter of every year prepare a complete financial statement for all accounts of the previous year and to prepare a budget for the incoming year. (income and expenses)
- E. The board may use funds available to them based on official documentation signed from the Archbishop of the Patriarchal Vicar and the treasury committee for all expenses needed by the board or other institutions after reviewing each institution's budget.

F. All monetary funds shall be placed in a bank in the name of the church and no amount may be withdrawn from the account without the approval and signature of the Archbishop and the Patriarchal Vicar and the Treasury Committee. The treasury may not hold within his person more than 1000 Syrian pounds or the equivalent. Any amount over 1000 Syrian pounds must be deposited in the church bank account.

ARTICLE 12: All financial statements, budgets, and expenses may be audited by His Holiness the Patriarch or his appointed person.

CHAPTER 5 PROHIBITIONS, DISCHARGES, AND RESIGNATIONS

ARTICLE 13: The board is prohibited from engaging in any political activities of any kind and from involvement in any religious issues.

ARTICLE 14: The board is prohibited from any involvement with any other diocese.

ARTICLE 15: No board member shall be permitted to doubt any person within the board or to harm any institution within the diocese, or to join any unlawful political organization, or to oppose the church faith. If any of these acts are committed, Discharge from the board is justified based a decision made by the board.

ARTICLE 16: A board member is discharged upon a conviction based on the decision made by the board

ARTICLE 17: A board member is considered discharged from the board if:

A. he/she has resigned whether or not the resignation was accepted by the board.

B. The board member was absent for three (3) consecutive meetings and the member is warned and if at the fourth meeting the member is absent without a valid excuse.

ARTICLE 18: The board of trustees is considered immediately dissolved if more than 50% of the members have resigned even if these members are appointed or elected. A new board shall then be formed according to articles 3,4 and 5. If the number of resignations is less then 50% of the total board, the Archbishop shall appoint new members to replace those who resigned pending the approval of His Holiness the Patriarch. The newly appointed members shall continue the term of the previous members.

CHAPTER 6
ADMINISTRATION AND COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

ARTICLE 19: The Archbishop or Patriarchal Vicar shall be the head of the board of trustees in his diocese. In his absence, the vice-president and secretary shall reside over the board.

ARTICLE 20: The term of office for the board of trustees shall be for two (2) years.

ARTICLE 21: The Archbishop has the right in his own decision to renew the board members for a second term.

ARTICLE 22: No member shall participate in the board of trustees for more than 2 consecutive terms whether appointed or elected.

ARTICLE 23: During the first meeting, the board of trustees shall elect:

A. Vice-President: whose duties include:

1. To reside over the board in the absence of the President.
2. Accept the responsibilities of the President, to represent the board, to supervise all of the committees, and to enforce the decisions made.

B. Secretary: Whose duties include:

1. Documentation of all meetings in an official record.
2. Organize and keep all records and documents.
3. Receive all letters, record, and distribute it to the appropriate parties after discussing its contents at the board meeting.
4. Is the official communicator between all boards and organizations.
5. The keeper of the official seal of the board and shall reside over the board meetings in the absence of the President and vice-president.

C. Board of Councilors: This board consists of the vice-president and 2 board members selected by the board. The duties of this board is to aid the Archbishop in all matters that require a rapid outcome.

D. The Financial Committee: This committee consists of three (3) members, the treasurer, the accountant, and one other board member. The duties consist of organizing the budget for the board and the diocese, and to supervise all other financial matters for the other diocese institutions.

- E. The School Inspection Committee: Consists of three (3) board members. The duties are to supervise the administration of the schools, to inspect them at least once every month, and to prepare a written report.
- F. Properties and Church Supervisory Committee: Consists of three (3) board members. The duties include supervising donations made to the church or diocese, the administration of all properties and possessions and inspection at least once every 3 months.

ARTICLE 24: The Archbishop or the Patriarchal Vicar shall enforce all decisions made by the board.

ARTICLE 25: All official records and documentation's must be stamped with the official seal of the board and be signed by the bishop or the Patriarchal Vicar on the first and last page of every document. These records must then be distributed to the appropriate parties.

- A. A record ledger must be kept for all mailings received and sent. Each document must be numbered consecutively and the name of the person sending the letter shall be documented.
- B. Meeting Minutes.
- C. Financial statements and receipts.
- D. A record of all properties and Ownership's that explain its description, worth, income, and other proof of ownership.
- E. A parish member list.

CHAPTER 7 BOARD MEETINGS

ARTICLE 26: The board shall meet in a designated conference area.

ARTICLE 27: The board shall meet at least once every two (2) weeks at an appointed time decided upon by the board.

ARTICLE 28: The board shall meet on a special basis when necessary and ordered by:

- A. the Archbishop or Patriarchal Vicar.
- B. The majority vote of the board that had been decided upon during a general meeting .
- C. The Vice-president or Secretary when acting as President in the absence of the President.

ARTICLE 29: The quorum of the board shall be more then 50% of the total members.

- ARTICLE 30: The president shall present the topics on the agenda for discussion and to decide upon them. He has the right to present the issues for voting.
- ARTICLE 31: All decisions must be made by a majority vote of those members present. In case of a tie, the presiding president shall decide the outcome.
- ARTICLE 32: The board minutes shall be written in the official record and be read at the end of the meeting and be approved and signed by all present.
- ARTICLE 33: The board shall not re-open for discussion any subject that had previously been decided upon. Also, no decision may be made that is similar or opposing any previous decision unless more than 2/3 of the board members are present and by a majority vote.
- ARTICLE 34: All decisions that oppose these bylaws are eliminated and void.
- ARTICLE 35: These bylaws are considered effective on the date that the Patriarch has sealed and signed these bylaws.

confirmed by His Holiness
the Patriarch
Mar Agnatius Zakka I Iwas
2/25/1984

Written and Approved by the
Holy Senate of Antioch
2/23/1984

